The Alternate Lemniscate

On the Geometry of Displacement

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I. The Loop Does Not Break — It Relocates

The common assumption about sin, addiction, and moral collapse is that they represent disorder — the disintegration of structure, the falling of the self into chaos. The Gaitan Topology suggests otherwise. When the self walks away from the crossing point — the locus of God's present, the eternal I AM — it does not cease to loop. It begins looping around something else.

The structure of devotion is preserved. What changes is the axis.

This is the geometric reality of what tradition calls hardness of heart: not the absence of a lemniscate, but the construction of an alternate one, with sin, ego, desire, or another person installed at the center. The self continues to oscillate, to return, to organize its days around a gravitational pull — only the pull is now false. The loop is real. The center is not.

> *The self does not stop looping when it leaves God. It begins looping around something else.*

This matters because it explains what mere moral language cannot: why destructive patterns feel meaningful, why addiction carries its own coherence, why people defend what is visibly destroying them. The alternate lemniscate is not chaos. It is order in the wrong key.

II. A Taxonomy of False Centers

The false center is not always the same thing. It assumes different forms, each with its own phenomenology, its own gravitational logic, and — as we will see — its own rupture mechanics.

Deferral

The first and perhaps most universal false center is not a thing at all — it is a tense. The self relocates its axis into the future, inhabiting the *not yet*, the *tomorrow we will open*. Lope de Vega named it with devastating simplicity in his famous sonnet "Que tengo yo que mi amistad procuras?(What do I have that you seek my friendship?): ***mañana le abriremos* — tomorrow we will open**. J.M. Barrie captured it as the Neverland of the self that refuses to arrive: *if only I had known*. But the oldest cartography of this displacement belongs to Dante, who did not fall into his dark wood in a single step. ***Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita / mi ritrovai per una selva oscura*** — midway along the journey. The descent is gradual, sequential, Dantean: one circle at a time, one deferred crossing point at a time, until the forest has become the landscape and the road is no longer visible. Deferral survives on the myth of infinite linear succession. It is the Ghost Zone's temporal mechanism: the self not merely referencing the future, but residing in it, extracting from it an identity it refuses to build in the present.

Desire

The second false center is perhaps the most structurally precise. Desire behaves like the Moore-Penrose pseudoinverse of the self: it approximates a solution when no true resolution exists, reaching toward fulfillment asymptotically, never arriving. The Moore-Penrose pseudoinverse finds the closest possible answer to an unsolvable equation — and desire does exactly this, perpetually. It loops around an object, attains it, finds it insufficient, and reaches further. The alternate lemniscate of desire is characterized by infinite extension: the horizon is always ahead, the center always receding. When the object is finally attained and found empty — or permanently denied — the wall of finitude appears. The self is forced to recoil back toward itself. That recoil, though painful, is the beginning of topology.

Pride

Here the false center is not external but self-generated. The self ceases to orbit and becomes the axis. *Non serviam.* In the language of the garden: *I become the tree at the center of my own garden*. The Serpent's grammar — *you will be like God* — is not merely a temptation; it is a topological proposal: relocate the crossing point into the self, become the source rather than the receiver of presence. Pride, at its extreme, does not merely displace the self from God — it constructs a rival universe with the self as its organizing principle. What the tradition calls Satan is the limit case of this geometry: a being so thoroughly installed as its own center that the original crossing point has become, in its perception, horizontal — good and evil collapsed into a single undifferentiated plane.

Fusion

Giovanni Papini, in *Il Giudizio Universale*, gives Heloise a devastating monologue. She speaks of having had to diminish herself — to downgrade her own soul — because when the soul you love is stronger than your own, the only path to union is descent. *I had to become less in order to become one.* This is the topology of relational displacement: the self does not inflate into pride but dissolves into another center. The lemniscate's crossing point migrates into another person, a relationship, a collective — and the self loses its singularity without gaining true union. What appears as love is often topological collapse: the self abandoning its own axis and orbiting another's, becoming a satellite rather than a centered being. The Legion passage in the Gospels is this dynamic at its extreme — not one false center but a multiplicity, the self so fragmented by fusion that when Christ asks *what is your name?*, the answer is *we are many*.

I must extend the argument here, because the notion of becoming a satellite is essential.

The person who fuses does not feel like they are losing themselves. They feel like they are *joining* something larger — a relationship, a movement, a collective identity. That is what makes it topologically dangerous: the satellite experiences its orbit as community. The gravitational pull feels like love, like solidarity, like finally being part of something that matters.

But a satellite has no crossing point of its own. It borrows the center of whatever it orbits. And when that center shifts — when the relationship ends, when the movement fractures,

when the group redefines itself — the satellite has nothing to return to. It doesn't drift back to its own axis. It simply follows the new orbit, or spins off into void.

This is the hidden geometry of groupthink, of ideological capture, of the kind of identity politics — left or right — where the self is entirely constituted by the collective. The group becomes the lemniscate. The group's enemies become the lower-left quadrant. The group's agenda becomes the crossing point. And the individual, having dissolved their own axis into the orbit, can no longer distinguish between the group's distortions and their own perception of reality.

Heloise named it from the inside with devastating honesty: *I had to become less in order to become one*. What she describes is not weakness — it is the precise mechanism. The self does not explode. It quietly hands over its axis.

Epistemic Error

Hans Christian Andersen understood something about collective topology that no sociologist has improved upon. The Emperor's new clothes are not visible to anyone — yet the court insists on their beauty, because the cost of honest perception is too high. Epistemic error, in the Gaitan Topology, is not mere ignorance: it is collectively reinforced illusion. The false center is stabilized not only by the individual's investment in it but by the social field that validates and mirrors it. The alternate lemniscate achieves critical mass when enough selves loop around the same false center, each confirming the others' orbit. At that point, the illusion does not need to be defended — it simply appears as reality. The fabric exists because everyone agrees it does.

Trauma

Here the taxonomy requires the greatest care, and the Church's own language is instructive. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (nn. 2280–2283), in treating suicide, acknowledges that *psychological disorders or severe fears can diminish responsibility*, entrusting these souls to divine mercy. Similarly, in treating habitual sins, the Church recognizes that *affective immaturity, ingrained habits, or anxiety can diminish moral culpability*. This is not moral relativism — it is topological precision. Trauma is not a chosen displacement but a structural damage to the curve itself. The self is not inhabiting the future or orbiting a false center by deliberate election; it is frozen in a past coordinate, unable to navigate back to the crossing point. Trauma cannot be argued away, because it is not an argument — it is a wound in the topology.

III. The Mechanics of Rupture

Each false center, by its nature, is inherently unstable — because each one is attempting to be what only the crossing point can be. Every alternate lemniscate contains the seed of its own rupture.

Deferral is broken when the future is forced to terminate in the present — a moment of now or never that collapses infinite succession into a single coordinate. Desire ruptures at the wall of finitude, when the object fails to carry the transcendence demanded of it.

Pride collapses when the self is revealed as contingent — not morally deficient but ontologically dependent, sustained rather than sustaining. Fusion breaks through the recovery of irreducible identity: what is your name? — the question that ontologically separates the self from the orbit of another. Epistemic error ruptures through exposure, when the billboard is torn down to reveal the empty wall — not replaced by a better image, but simply unmade. And trauma heals not through argument but through encounter: a Presence that enters the past coordinate and walks the person back to the now, restoring, as the Gospel says, the right mind — which is to say, right topology.

What is common to all six? Every rupture is a forced reconciliation between representation and reality. Every false center is a finite thing claiming infinite weight. Every rupture introduces limit — the wall of finitude is not only the mechanism of desire's collapse; it is the hidden structure of every rupture. The false center cannot bear the weight of the crossing point forever. It was never built to.

IV. Legion of Legions

When Christ asked the demoniac his name, the answer came back plural: *we are many*. Legion was not a collection of independent wills — it was a unified distortion field, many false centers orbiting in proximity, reinforcing each other's gravity, making the host's return to his own crossing point practically unimaginable from the inside.

What is true of one man is true, at scale, of a civilization.

When enough alternate lemniscates overlap — when enough selves have installed pride, deferral, desire, or fusion at their centers — the distortion ceases to be individual and becomes environmental. The false center is no longer a private aberration; it becomes the shared air.

Walk through the street and listen. *It's my life. I am free. Who are you to tell me?* This is not liberation. This is the liturgy of the alternate lemniscate — spoken by those who have named the pigsty home and called the naming freedom. And crucially, these lemniscates do not simply coexist. They reinforce. One false center validates the next. The Emperor's new clothes require a court. The court's admiration is what makes them real.

Ecclesiastes does not explain it. He simply names it:

> *In the place of judgment — wickedness was there. In the place of justice — wickedness was there.*

Not: wickedness has infiltrated these places. But: the institution has become the distortion. The robes remain. The gavels remain. The language of rights remains. The center has been replaced.

In social immorality — the vocabulary needed to name the crossing point is not abolished. It is made quaint. The concept of sin does not need to be prohibited. It only needs to become unintelligible.

In government corruption — the form of justice is preserved while the center is replaced. The robes are magnificent. No one mentions the wall behind them.

In corporate corruption — the language of human dignity is not rejected. It is monetized. The crossing point is sold as branding while the architecture of displacement is quietly funded.

> *Legion of Legions: not an army of villains. A civilization of wanderers, each orbiting a different false center, their combined drift tilting the horizon itself.*

Individual sin displaces a self. Collective sin displaces the horizon. And still — the crossing point does not disappear. It only becomes harder to see. Not because it has moved. Because everything else has.

Even Legion was sent into the swine. And the man was found — sitting, clothed, in his right mind.

V. The Master Key

When Moses asks for the name of the one who sends him, the answer is not a name in any ordinary sense. *I AM WHO I AM*. This is not theology as doctrine — it is topology as revelation. Pure presence without reference. The crossing point declaring itself.

Against deferral, He is Now. Against desire, He is Enough. Against pride, He is Source. Against fusion, He is the irreducible Other who does not absorb but distinguishes. Against illusion, He is Real. Against trauma, He is Here — not was, not will be, but is, always is, at the center.

The question we ask in catastrophe — *where was God?* — contains a grammatical error. God does not *was*. The topology has only one fixed point. Everything else moves. The catastrophe is not His absence — it is the accumulated noise of a thousand wrong centers, a civilization of alternate lemniscates whose overlapping distortions have displaced the horizon itself, making the crossing point difficult to see, though never impossible to reach.

The self does not fall by choosing evil. It falls by refusing the present.

And the present — the crossing point, the eternal I AM — remains exactly where it has always been.

Waiting.

Oscar Gaitan
Los Angeles, April 3, 2026
Viernes Santo

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